

GUIDE

TO

CHRISTIAN PERFECTION.

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For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

RELATION OF FAITH TO THE KNOWLEDGE OF THE WILL OF GOD.

It is difficult to appreciate too highly the value which we should attach to the will of God; a will which is always consonant with the highest rectitude, and always tends to the highest happiness. And it is equally difficult to state too strongly the obligation, which rests upon every individual, to bring every thought and feeling and action of his life into harmony with the divine will. Many persons appear to admit the existence of this obligation in its full extent, while they assert their inability to fulfil it, on the ground, that in particular cases and instances of duty they frequently do not know what the will of God is. They are willing to do what God wills; but their willingness is rendered unavailable by their ignorance. This exceedingly perplexes them.

The doctrine of sanctification by faith precisely and adequately meets this difficulty.

I. We remark, in the first place, that God may be regarded as having clearly made known, in his Word, his Providences, and in man's mental constitution, the great outlines of his will. It is his will, that we should fulfil the great ends of our being by doing justly, by showing mercy, and by rendering to our Maker under all circumstances the sincere and unlimited homage and love of our hearts. So that the difficulty does not seem to be in knowing the will of God,—in the more general sense of the terms, in knowing it in its general features and outlines,—but in ascertaining what it is, in connection with the duties, trials, and emergencies of particular occasions. Is it the will of God, that, in my setting out in life, I should adopt this calling or profession, or another that presents itself to my consideration? In

the multiplied and apparently conflicting duties which each day presents to our notice, shall I yield to these claims, or those? Shall I go to this place or that? When the urgent calls of necessary business seem to conflict with the claims of the poor and the suffering, shall I go to my farm and my merchandize, or shall I visit the chamber of the sick, and break bread to the hungry? Such are the questions, multiplied to a wonderful extent, which present themselves almost every day in the course of man's busy pilgrimage.

II. We proceed to remark further, that in many cases of this kind, where the motives which are presented are various and the paths of action are divergent, it is not easy for us to know, with *absolute certainty*, what course of action will most fully accord with the divine will. Constituted as we are at present, we may well pronounce it impossible to have such knowledge, except by means of a specific revelation given in each case. And we may even go further, and say, it is not the *design* of our heavenly Father, that, in matters of this kind we should always have a knowledge which is positive, and should always walk in a vision which is open. This is not God's plan of action. Far from it. Under the administration of an omniscient Being, whose knowledge, because it is omniscient, can never be explored, by created minds, it is a necessary law of all subordinate holy beings, whether they be men or angels or archangels, that they must live and act, in a considerable degree at least, *by faith*. It is true, that even in this life there is something of what may conveniently be called "open vision;" it is true, that the faith of the present life will in many things be exchanged for a still higher degree of open vision in the life to come; but beyond the open vision, both of the present and the future — beyond the open vision even of the highest angel, there still exists a land unknown, a universe which has not been explored, an ocean of things, and of the relations of things, of being and of action; an ocean wide as the omniscience of God, where created minds have never travelled. And in all this vast expanse, Faith, operating in a different sphere, but not differing in its nature, is the true light of heaven, as it is now, and always must be, the true light of earth. Angels and beings that dwell in the very bosom of God walk by it.

We repeat, therefore, that Faith is the one great law of the life of holy beings. Like the law of attraction, which is universal and reaches every particle of matter, however minute and however remote, it reaches and keeps in its position every moral being that is united to God as its centre. But it is hardly necessary to add, that the very nature of faith implies, that it is antagonistical to open knowledge. God, therefore, in a multitude of cases does not design (and such is the difference between the finite and the infinite, that he cannot design,) that we should live by such knowledge.

III. What, then, shall be done? If God does not reveal his will as a matter of positive knowledge, how can we be expected to walk in it? *The doctrine of the life of faith precisely meets these inquiries.*

But in ascribing the answer to inquiries of this kind to Faith, inquiries which constantly arise in connection with the duties and the trials of life,

we should remember, among other things, that a life of true faith is a life of *entire consecration*. And in this state of consecration, which always and necessarily implies a freedom from prejudice and all personal influence, we come and present the case of difficulty, whatever it may be, before God. With simplicity or singleness of heart, in other words, with the single motive of doing his will, we supplicate his direction. And while we are thus seeking the divine guidance, we also exercise those powers of reflection and judgment, which our heavenly Father has given us for the express purpose of being faithfully and conscientiously employed on their appropriate occasions. Under these circumstances, let us decide as we will, let us turn to the right or the left, let us advance or retreat, it is our privilege and our duty to believe, that we take the right course: in a single word, that we are right, because the Lord guides us.

In adopting this view, and in making these remarks, it will be naturally understood that we mean the right course in *the moral sense of the terms*. The prayer for divine direction, offered up in the spirit of consecration, which implies a heart wholly given to God, and offered up also in entire faith, which receives the promises of God without wavering, necessarily involves the result, that the course taken, whether it be conformed to *natural* wisdom or not, and is attended with the best natural results or not, is *morally* the right course, and is *entirely acceptable* to God. A man in that state of mind may commit a physical or prudential error; he may perhaps take a course which will be followed by the loss of his property or an injury to his person, but he cannot commit a moral error. That is to say, he cannot commit an error, which, *under the adjustments and pledges of the Gospel*, will bring him into a state of moral condemnation, and will have the effect to separate him from God and God's favor. The mistakes of judgment, if any such exist, are compensated by the rectitude of the heart. The humble and sincere uprightness, which exists there, taken in connection with the arrangements and promises of God, cannot fail to rectify and to make every thing well in the end.

It is the prayer of faith, therefore, involving, of course, an act of an entire consecration to God, which possesses the wonderful prerogative of leading us into the *right*, without *knowledge*, and even against knowledge. And hence it is, on the principles which have been laid down, that God, who always requires us to do what is right, so often shuts up the avenues of knowledge in particular cases of conduct, that we may do right by *faith* without knowledge. Faith is God's light in the soul; and he may be said, in a multitude of cases, to extinguish the light of knowledge, that he may kindle up the light of faith.

We are aware, that it may appear extraordinary to some persons, to speak of doing right by faith without knowledge. But delay a moment, and notice the precise import of these expressions, which obviously convey a great truth. What, then, is their true meaning? It is precisely this. In those cases, where we are destitute of positive knowledge, we must form the best

judgment we are able, looking to God with sincerity and singleness of purpose and in full faith also, that he will guide us aright. And the judgment which is formed under such circumstances, although it rests upon faith, and never in itself ascends above probability, yet becomes practically, and in the moral sense, KNOWLEDGE. That is to say, it answers the purpose of knowledge; and without being knowledge really, it is knowledge virtually.

IV. And we may now go further, and say, that in acting in accordance with the results which we thus obtain, we always and necessarily accomplish the will of God. We know his will, while in a certain sense we may be said to be ignorant of it; because it is his will, that we should live and act by faith without knowledge. "I adore all thy purposes," says Fenelon, "without knowing them." This is the great work of holiness, to do the will of God, while we know it, and can know it, only in part. Living by faith without knowledge, is living in the truest divine light. What did Noah know, when he entered into the ark; when he sailed on the tops of mountains, with nothing around him but clouds and storms? He knew nothing, but he *believed*. What did Abraham know, when he conducted his son Isaac to Mount Moriah to be sacrificed? Like Noah, he knew nothing of what was before him, but he had faith in God. In acting by faith, which took him from the control of self and placed him under the control of God, he necessarily accomplished the will of God, and it was "accounted to him for righteousness." When we are led in the way of faith, we are led by God himself; and it is impossible for God, by means of spiritual operations, to lead his people in a way, which is contrary to his own will. And being in his will, though it be a blind way to human sight, we are not profitless. "The blinded beast," says Molinos, "that turns the wheel of the mill, though it seeth not, neither knows what it does, yet it does a great work in grinding the corn."

V. These principles afford great consolation. Oh, the blessed simplicity of holy living; not more wonderful in its results, than in the simple nature of its methods! God always accomplishes the greatest results by methods, which men despise for their simplicity. Go on, therefore, beloved in the Savior, in this safe and living way of faith. Your way may be dark to human vision; but faith will make it light in the soul. The uncertainties of God, when enlightened by faith, are far better than the knowledge, which the world can give without faith. Thou art blindfolded as to outward vision, but still there is an eye that sees for thee. Follow the safe way of the true light! Other lights, on the right hand and left, may arise to dazzle and bewilder. It is the light of Faith only, which God kindles, and which leads to the blessed source, from which it came.

A. K.

The intention of divine institutions is then well answered, when one religious service helps to fit us for another, and all for heaven.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

TO SEEKERS OF THE WAY OF HOLINESS.

As "the way of holiness," so beautifully described by Isaiah, is the way in which Christians should travel, it is of the utmost importance that the professed followers of Jesus should "walk therein."

In my sixteenth year, I sought and obtained the pardon of my sins. A few years afterwards I entered the ministry, and attempted to call sinners to repentance. The doctrine of Christian perfection was then rarely heard from our pulpits, or witnessed by our members. It was a subject upon which I was unaccustomed to meditate, or a work which should be wrought in me *now*. Such was the state of the church, that it was seldom named by ministers or members, or if so, often considered *too sacred to be touched*, and was thus kept beyond our reach. At the conference at H——, in '42, I was privileged to hear a number of witnesses, who *recently* had obtained "the pearl of great price."

The testimony of one, especially, greatly affected me, and I resolved to seek for a clean heart. But alas! I suffered another year to steal away without obtaining the precious treasure. At the conference one year since, being favored with the conversation and preaching of the minister first alluded to, and seeing "the beauty of holiness so strikingly exemplified in all the deportment of one "whose conversation was in heaven," I vowed again to seek a deliverance from all sin, and an adoption into the family of God. With this determination I went to my appointment, praying that I might *see* and *feel* the depravity of my heart, and be made *willing* to give up all for Jesus. My prayer was soon answered. Such was the sense of inward corruption, that I felt to say, "how shall I, who am a man of unclean lips," preach a holy gospel. The struggle within my heart was awful. The evil passions of my nature, and Satan, were warring against my better judgment and the influences of the Spirit. One night, having agonized until a late hour, I was preparing to retire. But an impression was made by the Spirit that I should pray again. I fell upon my knees and commenced pleading for deliverance. Very soon the Spirit whispered, "is not Jesus your Advocate, your Mediator with the Father?" I stopped, and calmly looking up, replied, Yes, Savior, thou *art my Advocate — my Mediator* — and thou, blessed Spirit, "makest intercession

for me with groanings that cannot be uttered." At that instant, my eyes, which before had refused to weep, were suffused with tears. I wept, I knew not why, for my burden was gone, and I "rejoiced with joy unspeakable and full of glory." The next morning, when opening my bible, such floods of light and glory burst from the sacred page as I had never seen or felt before. It was a new book, and there Jesus seemed to speak to my rejoicing heart by his "exceeding great and precious promises." I immediately addressed a letter to the brother in the ministry referred to, (whom the Lord has since appointed to proclaim this full salvation throughout the whole church,) giving him a narration of the exercises of my mind, but telling him I did not think I had attained unto full salvation, not being satisfied with regard to the witness of the Spirit; thinking it must be a voice speaking to me. In reply to my letter, my friend told me he judged I had *tasted* of perfect love. This, however, I was unwilling to acknowledge, lest I should be deceived. But I felt no condemnation, and had joy and peace, and delighted to preach the doctrine of Christian perfection. Some two months afterward, I visited a place where the Lord was raising up many witnesses of sanctifying grace. I told the minister the past exercises of my mind, and that I longed to be entirely sanctified, and made a child of God. He replied, "Brother, on the night you were so powerfully blest, had you *believed* that you *then* received the blessing, the work would *then* have been wrought. Now *believe* that it *is* done and it *will* be done." I went to church and heard many testify of a full salvation. One sister rose, and said in substance, "I have been seeking for a clean heart: I earnestly desire to be delivered from all sin." She paused, — then exclaimed, "I *do believe* that Jesus *this moment* has given me a *new heart*."

The change was so apparent in her countenance, and the angelic rapture that burst from her lips, that no room was left to doubt. I plainly saw it was by *simple faith*. I was encouraged to lay hold — to take Jesus at his word, as recorded in St. Mark, xi., 24. I ventured *my all* upon him. I felt a sinking down into the will of God. I acknowledged him in my own heart, and publicly, that hour. A sweet calmness, and deep, holy peace settled within my soul, for God *had written* his new, best name of *Love* upon my heart. I realized a deadness to the world — an emptiness of self, and that I had commenced *a life of faith*. My brethren said, "Go and tell what the Lord has done for you; — preach this great salvation *everywhere*, and God will own it, and raise up witnesses." I went the next Sabbath and commented on the words of Jesus: "What things soever ye desire when

ye pray, *believe* that ye *receive* them and ye *shall have them*." God owned his word; and blessed be his holy name, before the services of that hour closed, two souls witnessed for Jesus, that he had cleansed them from *all* sin. The glorious work spread abroad. Many souls gave satisfactory evidence of a *clean heart*, numbers of whom have already become "burning and shining lights." They show, by their daily walk—their heavenly conversation, "that they have been with Jesus, and learned of him, that the life they now live is by faith upon the Son of God."

The work is still advancing—God is doing wonders, and will continue to work while we as Christian ministers *all* do our duty.

O my brethren of every Christian denomination—*believe, live, and preach* this blessed doctrine. Seek its fulness, and its purifying power. View it as a *present salvation*. Its demands are these—Are you convinced of the *necessity* of a clean heart? Are you *willing* to be saved *now*? Do you desire full salvation *above every thing else*? If so, "*dare to believe*"—Come *as you are*—Come *now*,—stretch out that withered hand—*doubt not the result* of the effort, and you will be made "every whit whole." The death-blow to sin will then have been given. It cannot live in a heart filled with love to God and man. My soul has been filled with great peace while tracing these unworthy lines; and my prayer to God is, that they may in some degree be made instrumental in advancing the interests of the Redeemer's coming kingdom.

J. A. B.

Bainbridge, Ohio, Nov. 1, 1844.

For the 'Guide to Christian Perfection.

A HINT TO THOSE WHO ARE SEEKING PERFECT LOVE.

NECESSITY OF CLEAR VIEWS OF THE BLESSING.

1. *Lest we aim too high*.—Perfect love is a definite object, and if we would obtain it, true policy requires that we should direct our efforts pointedly at that. He who hits an inch above the mark as certainly misses it as though he hit an inch beneath. Nor in the present case will this be the only evil. Having through error sought for the perfection of angels, and having found that unattainable, we easily conclude that Christian per-

fection is not attainable ; and thus discourage others who might have sought aright. True, it is possible, that in striving for the perfection of angels, we may attain to the perfection of holy men, but looking for something higher, we neglect the blessing already bestowed, and a blessing neglected is soon a blessing lost.

2. *Lest we aim too low.*—If we aim at something low and call that perfect love, we may indeed attain it, but as our life will necessarily correspond with our standard — be far below that which should spring from so high a profession — we shall only reproach the cause we love. Would that there were no facts to illustrate this remark ! But, alas, in what society do we not find holiness wounded in the house of its friends ! How often has strongly excited feeling usurped the place of deep religious principle, and thus given coloring to the accusation of our adversaries — that we have deprived the doctrine of its heart, and then held up the empty form as easily attainable ! How often in our prayer-meetings, and at our camp-meetings, have those been the loudest in their professions of entire holiness, whose private life demanded that they of all others should keep the most profound silence !

At the present time it is especially necessary that we be on our guard against too low a standard ; as there are those who teach that a Christian is necessarily entirely sanctified at the time he is justified ; and those who are not looking for great things, are, above all others, in danger of falling into this “heresy,” as it is called by our English brethren. It is no small thing to be “pure as Christ is pure,” “holy as he that hath called us is holy,” “perfect as our Father who is in heaven is perfect.”

3. *That we may know when we find it.*—There is a man whose object is to select an American eagle from a heap of various coin. He turns over the heap repeatedly, but in vain. He knows neither the color, the weight, the figure, nor the inscription of that for which he seeks ! And have we never pursued a similar course in reference to perfect love ? The writer dares not accuse others, but he must in his own case plead guilty of this very folly. He remembers that for weeks, perhaps months, he spoke doubtfully in regard to his own experience of the blessing, when, had he had a clearer view of the doctrine, he would have spoken confidently.

It is the more necessary that we be able to recognize the object of our search, because we have a great adversary who will dispute us when we bring forth our coin. It is indispensable that we be able to point to the inscription — Jesus the Sanctifier. Of what avail is it that we claim an estate, if we cannot show a

deed drawn up in the full form of law? The first pretender that arises, (and in our case they will arise,) can easily, successfully dispute our title, and throw us out of our possession. And how great the host who have received, but who have in this manner lost the blessing of perfect love. For a time their hearts were full, yea, overflowing with joy and peace. But trial came. "It cannot be that that was the blessing, else why this temptation, why this sorrow of heart?" Thus doubt arose; and with doubt, darkness; and with darkness, despair; and they were shorn of their locks and became as other men. Whereas, had they possessed clear views of the blessing and its trials, they might have stood

Firm as an iron pillar strong,
And steadfast as a wall of brass.

Of course it will not be expected of me, that in this article I should attempt to show what clear views are. I can only refer to the writings of Wesley, Fletcher, Upham, Mahan and others, upon this subject, and recommend their prayerful perusal. Frequently great assistance may be derived from personal conversation with those who have already obtained the blessing.

T. H. MUDGE.

Leominster, Nov., 1844.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

DO THE SANCTIFIED ENJOY THE DIRECT EVIDENCE OF THE SPIRIT?

BROTHER KING:—I wish to call attention to a remark which our beloved brother Stearns made, in the October Number of the GUIDE, respecting the privilege of the Sanctified to enjoy the direct evidence of the Holy Spirit. Having said that this doctrine was denied by some, he declares, "I had conceived this to be an undoubted doctrine of Methodism. I began, the first opportunity, to search our standard writers, but found them *uniformly silent upon this point.*" I should not call attention to this subject, did I not think that the declaration might exert an unfavorable influence. We have been accustomed to believe, that our standard authors have presented the doctrine of Christian Holiness in a very perspicuous light; and if they have never declared that it is the privilege of the sanctified believer to enjoy the direct witness of the Spirit, so far as their influence goes, it would check the panting soul from seeking after the direct evidence of internal purity.

Mr. Wesley treats this subject as follows:

"But how do you know that you are sanctified — saved from your inbred corruption? I can know it no otherwise than I know that I am justified. 'Hereby know we that we are of God,' in either sense, 'by the Spirit that he hath given us.' We know it by the witness and by the fruit of the Spirit. And, first, by the witness. As, when we were justified, the Spirit bore witness with our spirit, that our sins were forgiven; so, when we were sanctified, he bore witness that they were taken away. Indeed, the witness of sanctification is not always clear at first, as neither is that of justification; neither is it afterwards always the same—but, like that of justification, sometimes stronger and sometimes fainter; yea, and sometimes it is withdrawn. Yet, in general, the latter testimony of the Spirit is both as clear and as steady as the former.

"But does not sanctification shine by its own light? And does not the new birth too? Sometimes it does; and so does sanctification—at others it does not. In the hour of temptation, Satan clouds the work of God, and injects various doubts and reasonings, especially in those who have either very weak or very strong understandings. At such times there is absolute need of that witness, without which the work of sanctification not only could not be discerned, but could no longer subsist. Were it not for this, the soul could not then abide in the love of God; much less could it rejoice evermore and in every thing give thanks. In these circumstances, therefore, a direct testimony that we are sanctified, is necessary in the highest degree.

"But what scripture makes mention of any such thing? Answer: That scripture, 'We have received, not the spirit that is of the world, but the Spirit which is of God; that we may know the things which are freely given us of God.' 1 Cor. 2, 12. Now surely Sanctification is one of 'the things which are freely given us of God.'" Wesley's Works, vol. vi. pp. 515, 516.

So far, then, as the testimony of Mr. Wesley is concerned, it is most explicit. And none of our standard authors have ever called in question the validity of the doctrine of Mr. Wesley to which we have alluded. It has always been maintained by our standard authors, that we could know nothing of the work of divine grace upon the heart, but by the Spirit of God which is given unto us; or, to express it in the language of Mr. Benson,— "For it is by his influence (the Spirit's), and his alone, that we can 'know the things' that are freely given to us of God, namely, what they are, their nature and excellence, and that they are ours." Com. on Rom. viii. 16.— May God grant that we all may know, by happy experience, that the doctrine is true, that the pure in heart enjoy the comforting indwelling of the Holy Spirit, assuring us that our graces are fully matured and that sin in us is all destroyed.

O. C. BAKER.

Rochester, N. H.

The time of God's patience and forbearance towards provoking sinners is sometimes long, but always limited.

AN ADDRESS TO PERFECT CHRISTIAN PHARISEES.

The following Address was issued a long time ago by that able theologian and eminent saint, John Fletcher. But being dead he may yet speak. Let such as *think* they have much faith, but do not feel inclined to *work* for the Lord, ponder this subject. The man of true faith will be adorned with the graces of the Gospel; and he will rejoice to *sacrifice* time and money and fame, that he may advance the cause of his Master. The reader will notice that Mr. Fletcher uses the term "perfectionist" to represent the advocate of Christian perfection. In later days we have found it necessary to introduce this distinction, on account of a class of wild fanatics, who have appropriated to themselves the title "Perfectionists," while they have nothing in common with us except it be a few scriptural expressions.

I ADDRESS you, ye perfect Christian Pharisees, because ye are most ready to profess Christian perfection, though, alas! ye stand at the greatest distance from perfect humility, the grace which is most essential to the perfect Christian's character; and because the enemies of our doctrine make use of you first, when they endeavor to root it up from the earth.

That ye may know whom I mean by *perfect Christian Pharisees*, give me leave to show you your own picture, in the glass of a plain description. Ye have, *professedly*, entered into the fold where Christ's sheep, which are perfected in love, rest all at each other's feet, and at the feet of the Lamb of God. But how have ye entered? By "Christ, the door," or at the door of presumption? Not by Christ the door: for Christ is meekness and lowliness manifested in the flesh; but ye are still ungentle and fond of praise. When he pours out his soul as a Divine Prophet, he says, "Learn of me, for I am meek and lowly in heart; take my yoke upon you, and ye shall find rest unto your souls." But ye overlook this humble door. Your proud, gigantic minds, are above stooping low enough to follow Him, who "made himself of no reputation," that he might raise us to heavenly honors; and who, to pour just contempt upon human pride, had his first night's lodging in a stable, and spent his last night partly on the cold ground, in a storm of Divine wrath, and partly in an ignominious confinement, exposed to the greatest indignities, which Jews and Gentiles could pour upon him. He rested his infant head upon hay, his dying head upon thorns. A manger was his cradle, and a cross his death bed. Thirty years he travelled from the sordid stable to the accursed tree, unnoticed by his own pe-

culiar people. In the brightest of his days, poor fishermen, some Galilean women, and a company of shouting children, formed all his retinue. Shepherds were his first attendants, and malefactors his last companions.

His first beatitude was, "Blessed are *the poor in spirit*;" and the last, "Blessed are ye, when men shall revile you, and persecute you, and say all manner of evil against you falsely, for my sake." His first doctrine was, "Repent;" nor was the last unlike to it: "If I have washed your feet, ye ought also to wash one another's feet, for I have given you an example that ye should do as I have done to you. He that will be first among you let him be the least of all." Now, far from practising with godly sincerity this last lesson of our humble Lord, you do not so much as truly relish the first. Ye do not delight in, nay ye abhor penitential poverty of spirit. Your humility is not cordial, and wrought into your nature by grace; but complimentary, and woven into your carriage by art. Ye are humble in looks, in gestures, in voice, in dress, in behavior; so far as external humility helps you to secure the reputation of perfect Christians, at which ye aspire from a motive of Pharisaic ambition: but ye continue strangers to the childlike simplicity, and unaffected lowliness of Christ's perfect disciples. Ye are the very reverse of those "Israelites in whom there is no guile." Ye resemble the artful Gibeonites, who, for a time, imposed upon Joshua's artless simplicity. Your feigned profession of special grace deceives those of God's children, who have more of the simplicity of the dove than of the serpent's wisdom. Ye choose the lowest place, but ye do not love it. If ye cheerfully take it, it is not among your equals, but among your inferiors: because you think that such a condescending step may raise the credit of your humility, without endangering your superiority. If ye stoop, and go down, it is not because ye see yourselves unworthy of the seat of honor; but because ye hope that people will by and by say to you, Come up higher. Your Pharisaic cunning aims at wearing at once the coronet of genuine humility, and the crown of self-exalting pride. Ye love to be esteemed of men for your goodness and devotion: ye want to be admired for your exactness, zeal, and gracious attainments. The pride of the Jewish Pharisees was coarse in comparison of yours. They wore the rough garment, and you wear the silks of spiritual vanity; and even when ye dye them in the blood of the Lamb, which you extol in word, it is to draw the confidence of humble Christians by your Christian appearance and language, more than to follow the propensity of a new nature, which loves to be clothed with humility, and feels itself

in its own centre when it rests in deep poverty of spirit, and sees that God is "all in all."

One of the greatest ends of Christ's coming into the world, was to empty us of ourselves, and to fill us with humble love; but ye are still full of yourselves and void of Christ, that is, void of humility incarnate. Ye still aim at some wrong mark; whether it be self-glory, self-interest, self-pleasure, self-party, or self-applause. In a word, one selfish scheme or another, contrary to the pure love of God and of your neighbor, secretly destroys the root of your profession, and may be compared to the unseen worm that ate the root of Jonah's gourd. Ye have a narrow, contracted spirit: ye do not gladly sacrifice your private satisfaction, your interest, your reputation, your prejudices, to the general interest of truth and love, and to the public good of the whole body of Christ. Ye are in secret bondage to men, places, and things. Ye do not heartily entertain the wisdom from above, which is pure, gentle, easy to be entreated, and full of mercy. Nay, ye are above conviction: gross sinners yield to truth before you. Like Jehu, ye are zealous, and ye pretend that it is for the Lord of hosts: but alas! it is for your opinions, your party, your honor. In a word, ye do not walk in constant, solemn expectation of death and judgment; your will is not broken; your carnal confidence is yet alive; the heavenly dove does not sit in your breast: self, wrapt up in the cloak of humility, is still set up in your hearts, and in secret you serve that cursed idol more than God. Satan, transformed into an angel of light, has artfully led you to the profession of Christian perfection through a circle of external performances, through glorious forms of doctrine in the letter, and through a fair show of zeal for complete holiness: the Lord, to punish your formality, has in part given you up to your delusion; and now ye as much believe yourselves perfect Christians, as the Pharisees, in our Lord's day, believed themselves perfect Jews.

Mr. Wesley, in his *Plain Account of Christian Perfection*, has borne his faithful testimony against such witnesses of perfect love as ye are. If ye despise this address, regard his remarks: "Others," says he, "who think they have the direct witness of their being renewed in love, are nevertheless manifestly wanting in the fruit. Some are undoubtedly wanting in *long suffering*, Christian resignation. They do not see the hand of God in whatever occurs, and cheerfully embrace it. They do not "in every thing give thanks, and rejoice evermore." They are not happy; at least, not always happy. For sometimes they complain. They say, "This is hard!" Some are wanting in *gentleness*.

They "resist evil," instead of turning the other cheek. They do not receive reproach with gentleness: no, nor even reproof. Nay, they are not able to bear contradiction without the appearance, at least, of resentment. If they are reprov'd, or contradicted, though mildly, they do not take it well. They behave with more distance and reserve than they did before, &c. Some are wanting in *goodness*. They are not kind, mild, sweet, amiable, soft, and loving at all times, in their spirit, in their words, in their looks, in their air, in the whole tenor of their behavior; not kind to all, high and low, rich and poor, without respect of person; particularly to them that are out of the way, to opposers, and to those of their own household. They do not long, study, endeavor, by every means, to make all about them happy. Some are wanting in *fidelity*, a nice regard to truth, simplicity, and godly sincerity. Their love is hardly "without dissimulation:" something like guile is found in their mouth. To avoid roughness, they lean to the other extreme. They are smooth to an excess, so as scarce avoid a degree of fawning. Some are wanting in *meekness*, quietness of spirit, composure, evenness of temper. They are up and down, sometimes high, sometimes low; their mind is not well balanced. Their affections are either not in due proportion; they have too much of the one, too little of the other; or they are not duly mixed and tempered together so as to counterpoise each other. Hence there is often a jar. Their soul is out of tune, and cannot make the true harmony. Some are wanting in *temperance*. They do not steadily use that kind and degree of food which they know, or might know, would most conduce to the health, strength, and vigor of the body. Or they are not temperate in sleep: they do not rigorously adhere to what is best for body and mind. They use neither fasting nor abstinence," &c.

I have described your delusion: but who can describe its fatal consequences? Who can tell the mischief it has done, and continues to do? The few sincere perfectionists, and the multitude of captious imperfectionists, have equally found you out. The former are grieved for you; and the latter triumph through you.

When the sincere perfectionists consider the inconsistency of your profession, they are ready to give up their faith in Christ's all-cleansing blood, and their hope of getting a clean heart in this life. They are tempted to follow the multitude of professors, who sit down in self-imputed righteousness, or in Solifidian*

* The Solifidian expects to be saved by faith, without any connection with works.—Ed.

notions of an ideal perfection in Christ. And it is well if some of them have not already yielded to the temptation, and begun to fight against the hopes which they once entertained of loving God with all their hearts. It is well if some, through you, have not been led to say, "I once sweetly enjoyed the thought of doing the will of God on earth, as it is done in heaven. Once I hopefully prayed God would "so cleanse my heart, that I might perfectly love and worthily magnify his holy name" in this world. But now I have renounced my hopes, and I equally abhor the doctrine of evangelical perfection, and that of evangelical worthiness. When I was a young convert, I believed that Christ could really make an end of all moral pollution, cast out the man of sin, and cleanse us from the sins of the heart as well as from outward iniquity in this life; but I soon met with unhumbled, self-willed people, who, boldly standing up for this glorious liberty, made me question the truth of the doctrine. Nay, in process of time, I found that some of those who most confidently professed to have attained this salvation, were farther from the gentleness, simplicity, catholic spirit, and unfeigned humility of Christ, than many believers, who had never considered the doctrine of Christian perfection. These offences striking in with the disappointment which I myself met with, in feebly seeking the pearl of perfect love, made me conclude that it can no more be found than the philosopher's stone, and that they are all either fools or knaves, who set believers upon seeking it. And now I every where decry the doctrine of perfection as a dangerous delusion. I set people against it wherever I go; and my zeal in this respect has been attended with the greatest success. I have damped the hopes of many perfectionists! And I have proselyted several to the doctrine of Christian imperfection. With them I now quietly wait to be purified from indwelling sin in the article of death, and to be made perfect in another world."

This is, I fear, the language of many hearts, although it is not openly spoken by many lips. Thus are you, O ye perfect Pharisees, the great instruments by which the tempter tears away the shield of those unsettled Israelites, who look more at your inconsistencies than they do at the beauty of holiness, the promise of God, the blood of Christ, and the power of the Spirit.

But this is not all; as ye destroy the budding faith of sincere perfection, so ye strengthen the unbelief of the Solifidians. Through you their prejudices are grown up into a fixed detestation of Christian perfection. Ye have hardened them in their error, and furnished them with plausible arguments to destroy

the truth which ye contend for. Did ye never hear their triumphs? "Ha! ha! So would we have it! These are some of the people who stand up for sinless perfection! They are all alike. Did not I tell you that you would find them out to be no better than temporary monsters? What monstrous pride! What touchiness, obstinacy, bigotry, and stoicism characterizes them! How do they strain at gnats and swallow camels! I had rather be an open drunkard than a perfectionist. Publicans and harlots shall enter into the kingdom of heaven before them." These are the cutting speeches to which your glaring inconsistency, and the severe prejudices of our opponents, give birth. Is it not deplorable that your tempers should thus drive men to abhor the doctrine which your lips recommend?

And what do you get by thus dispiriting the real friends of Christian perfection, and by furnishing its sworn enemies with such sharp weapons against it? Think ye that the mischief ye do shall not recoil upon yourselves? Is not Christ the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever? If he detested the perfect Pharisaism of unhumbléd Jews, will he admire the perfect self-righteousness of aspiring Christians? If he formerly "resisted the proud, and gave grace to the humble," what reason have ye to hope that he will submit to your spiritual pride, and reward your religious ostentation with a crown of glory! Ye perhaps cry out against Antinomianism, and I commend you for it: but are ye not deeply tainted with the worst sort of Antinomianism — that which starches, stiffens, and swells the soul? Ye justly bear your testimony against those who render the law of Christ of none effect to believers, by degrading it into a rule which they stripped of the punitive and remunerative sanctions with which it stands armed in the sacred records. But are ye not doubly guilty, who maintain that this law is still in force as a law, and nevertheless refuse to pay it sincere, internal obedience? For when ye break the first commandment of Christ's evangelical law, by practically discarding penitential "poverty of spirit;" and when ye transgress the last, by abhorring the lowest place, by disdaining to "wash each other's feet," and by refusing to "prefer others in honor before yourselves;" are ye not guilty of breaking all the law by breaking it in one point, — in the capital point of humble love, which runs through all the parts of the law, as vital blood does through all the parts of the body? O how much more dangerous is the case of an unhumbléd man, who stiffly walks in robes of self-made perfection, than that of an humble man who through prejudice, and the force of example, meekly walks in robes of self-imputed righteousness!

Behold, thou callest thyself *a perfect Christian*, and retest in the evangelical law of Christ, which is commonly called the Gospel: thou makest thy boast of God, and knowest his will, and approvest the things that are more excellent, even the way of Christian perfection, being instructed out of the Gospel; and art confident that "thou thyself art a guide of the blind, a light of them who are in darkness, an instructor of the foolish, and a teacher of babes," or imperfect believers; having the form of knowledge and of the truth in the Gospel. Thou therefore who teachest another, teachest thou not thyself? Thou that preachest, another should not break the law of Christ, through breaking it dishonorest thou God? For the name of God is blasphemed through you among those who seek an occasion to blaspheme it, Romans, ii. 17, &c. And think ye that ye shall escape the righteous judgment of God? Has Christ no woes but for the Jewish Pharisees? O be no longer mistaken. Before ye are punished by being here given up to a reprobate mind, and by being hereafter cast into the hell of hypocrites, the outer darkness where there will be more weeping, wailing, and gnashing of teeth than in any other hell! Before ye are overtaken by the awful hour of death, and the dreadful day of judgment, practically learn that Christian perfection is the mind which was in Christ, especially his humble, meek, quiet mind; his gentle, free, loving spirit. Aim at it by sinking into deep self-abhorrence; and not by using, as ye have hitherto done, the empty talk and profession of Christian perfection as a step to reach the top of spiritual pride.

Mistake me not: I do not blame you for holding the doctrine of Christian perfection, but for wilfully missing the only way that leads to it; I mean the humble, meek, and loving Jesus, who says, "I am the way, and the door: by me if any man enter in, he shall be saved into so great salvation. He that entereth not by this door into this sheep-fold, but climbeth up some other way, [and especially he that climbeth up the way of Pharisaic formality,] the same is a thief and a robber:" he robs Christ of his glory, and pretends to what he has no more right to than a thief has to your property. Would ye then be right? Do not cast away the doctrine of an evangelically sinless holiness; but contend more for it with your heart than with your lips. With all your soul press after such a perfection as Christ, St. Paul, and St. John taught and exemplified; a perfection of meekness and humble love. Earnestly believe all the woes which the Gospel denounces against self-righteous Pharisees, and all the blessings which it promises to perfect penitents. Drink less into the

letter, and more into the Spirit of Christ, till, like a fountain of living water, it spring up to everlasting life in your heart. Ye have climbed to the Pharisaic perfection of Saul of Tarsus, when, "touching the righteousness of the law, he was blameless." Would ye now attain the evangelical perfection which he was possessed of, when he said, "Let us, as many as are perfect, be thus minded?" Only follow him through the regeneration: fall to the dust before God; rise conscious of the blindness of your heart, meekly deplore it with penitential shame; and if you follow the directions laid down in the third address, I doubt not but, dangerous as your case is at present, you will be, like St. Paul, as eminent for Christian perfection, as you have hitherto been for Pharisaic formality.

For the Guide to Christian Perfection.

EVERY DAY EXPERIENCE.

(Continued.)

July 20.—I desire to abound more and more in praises, and giving of thanks. I am continually receiving mercy, grace and strength, so would I continually offer to God the sacrifice of praise. Praise enlarges the heart, and increases our love to God; it relieves the mind from selfish activity, and from gloom. "It is good to sing praises unto our God; it is pleasant, and praise is comely." *Praise ye the Lord.*

26.—Was cast down, and greatly afflicted on account of the irregular proceedings and expressions of one professing holiness. Saw the cause of holiness bleeding, severely wounded. Found my faith tried; was almost afraid to venture farther myself on holy ground, so awful seemed the danger of trespassing.

Aug. 5.—It is sweet to be restored again to union and communion with my God and Savior. From this painful lesson may I learn never to be disquieted, let what will come. May my faith in God be above, beyond the control of any circumstances, however dark and appalling; may it be firm as God himself. I know how to value now, more than ever, that blessed peace and *quiet rest*, which comes of steadfast, unwavering faith. Not more grateful to the mariner is the clear sunshine after many days of storm, than the return of peace to my bosom, after these days of inward disquiet.

Aug. 19.—I desire this day to give myself afresh to Jesus, my master, to do his work, and his only; to follow in the way of his precepts, and by the

light of his example ; and *not in the way of the world*. I realize the danger to which I am exposed, of being influenced by the world, or by worldly professions. O save me from such an influence ; from any imperceptible yielding little by little, until I shall find myself, alas ! serving the world instead of Thee, my Lord, my God. Blessed Lord, my heart has been set one year and a half to serve Thee, and sometimes I fear I have hardly done so yet, so many counter influences have operated upon me ; but Thou knowest my heart ; whatever I do, or do not, my *heart is thine*. Now, again, I give myself up to Thee ; I am thine, soul, body, and spirit. O do Thou preserve me blameless every moment of my life. Keep me one with Thyself ; as Thou dost keep Thyself. Do Thou wholly absolve me from all undue creature influence. To whom else am I bound but to Thee ? Whom should I serve but Thee, my Lord ? O do Thou glorify thyself in me, for I am thine, and thine alone. Do Thou look down, and seal me again as Thine ; renew the baptismal waters, the plenteous effusion of the Holy Ghost, into which my soul was plunged, and made clean. Have I ever revoked the words then uttered by me, " Lord, I am thine ? " I trust not. Still more and more have my desires been enlarged to be thine, and thine only, and thine forever.

25.—The past week has been one of inward trial. So closely have I been followed by the tempter, from day to day, that I know not but what I may have yielded and sinned ; it has been a weary week, my spirit is tried. The archer has sorely shot at, and grieved me. The thought that disturbed my mind, and carried me off my centre, from God, was, that I had ceased to care for souls, and was declining spiritually. An alarming thought, indeed, and has led to a careful review of my state before God. Thus much I yield. I may often err as to ways and plans of doing good, but my desire has been, and still is, whole-hearted, to live to God, — my purpose so to do, remains immovable as the rock. I am now aware that circumstances have somewhat varied my duties, and from this cause, I believe, has arisen this painful trial. The Lord make me easy in his Providences, and save me from a desire to labor out of, and beyond my present sphere. V. W.

USEFULNESS OF THE GUIDE.

Rev. J. A. B. writes : — I have, since eighteen months ago, taken the GUIDE, and been much profited in its perusal, and have recommended it to our church wherever I go. I thank the Lord for the blessed fruit which I believe it is producing in this Western country.

Bainbridge, Ohio.

NOT SELF PRAISE.

WHEN we extol the GUIDE, it is not on account of any of our own work ; but we know it is entertaining and highly useful, and it is but justice to the publishers and our correspondents, we should say so.

We have an interesting translation for the next number, which came too late for this.

EXPLANATION WHY WE CLOSE A VOLUME WITH THIS NUMBER.

1. HAVE a prospect of a large accession to our subscription list about the first of January. Subscribers generally prefer to commence with a new volume : but we can supply only a few sets of the present volume, and still we have not sufficient encouragement to republish the back numbers. So we deem it advisable to commence a new volume with the year 1845.

2. We have already many subscribers whose year commences with January instead of July ; it will be an accommodation to such, to have their volumes commence with the new year.

3. We will not infringe, in the least, on the arrangement of those who have regular volumes commencing with July. We shall close a volume once in six months ; so that those who commenced in July, can at the close of their year, bind their two volumes in one ; so they will have their volumes to their own satisfaction, and at the same time have the pleasure of knowing, that those who prefer to commence their subscription with the civil year, are equally well accommodated.

4. The terms of the GUIDE remain as heretofore, one dollar *per annum*, in advance.

A WORD TO OUR READERS.

You have found the GUIDE beneficial to your spiritual interests ; you have learned that others have been profited through its instrumentality ; for all this we will praise the Lord ; but it should not be forgotten, that thousands are without it. Let us suggest that you make a special effort to procure subscribers for the forthcoming volume. Can you not get us six subscribers, and send us five dollars as per terms ? Do it, if you can. At least, get *one* new subscriber. We look to our *brethren in the ministry* and to all our readers for aid. Give us a generous new year's present. But let it come as early as the 20th of December, that the publishers may know how many are wanted. We must urge a little. While the blessing of the present number is fresh in your soul, make the effort. Make it for our sake ; we need the patronage. Make it for your own sake ; there is a gracious reward for doing good. Make it for your neighbor's sake ; the GUIDE may be to them an angel of mercy. Do it for Jesus' sake ; he delights to see his people instructed in the way of holiness.

